

## Claims

- [c1] 1.A method for planning the timing of a feature introduction of a product comprising:  
 selecting a feature of a product for which a feature introduction timing plan is to be calculated;  
 estimating a first-to-market timing for said feature;  
 selecting a product attribute leadership strategy (PALS) for said feature, said PALS based on a desired competitive market timing;  
 retrieving a PALS adjustment factor associated with said PALS from a PALS adjustment factor database;  
 selecting a product segment for said feature;  
 selecting one of a plurality of feature types for said feature;  
 retrieving a segment adjustment factor associated with said product segment and said one of said plurality of feature types from a segment adjustment factor database; and  
 calculating said feature introduction timing plan for said feature and said product segment based on said PALS adjustment factor, said segment adjustment factor, and said first-to-market timing.
- [c2] 2.The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining an engineering resource allocation based on said feature introduction timing plan.
- [c3] 3.The method of claim 1, wherein said selecting said PALS is based on an expected profit for said product.
- [c4] 4.The method of claim 1, wherein said selecting said PALS is based on a consumer market demand.
- [c5] 5.The method of claim 1, wherein said product comprises an automobile.
- [c6] 6.The method of claim 1, wherein said PALS adjustment factor comprises a time period.
- [c7] 7.The method of claim 1, wherein said calculating said feature introduction timing plan is performed by a computer program.

- [c8] 8.The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of comparing said feature introduction timing plan with a current product timing plan.
- [c9] 9.A method for planning the timing of a feature introduction of a product comprising:  
 selecting a feature of a product for which a feature introduction timing plan is to be calculated;  
 estimating a first-to-market time for said feature; and  
 generating a feature introduction timing plan for said product based on said first-to-market time, a product attribute leadership strategy, a product segment, and a feature type.
- [c10] 10.The method of claim 9, wherein said product attribute leadership strategy is based on a consumer market demand.
- [c11] 11.The method of claim 9, wherein said estimating said first-to-market time comprises gathering competitive intelligence.
- [c12] 12.The method of claim 9, wherein said product attribute leadership strategy is based on an expected increase of sales of said product when said feature is included in said product.
- [c13] 13.The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of choosing said product attribute leadership strategy from a finite set of product attribute leadership strategies.
- [c14] 14.The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of choosing said product segments from a finite set of product segments.
- [c15] 15.The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of choosing said feature type from a finite set of feature types.